

**“This is everything that’s important to rural communities.”**

— Laura Brown



## Strengthening Rural Communities

### Beyond school borders in Crawford County

The AmeriCorps farm to school program in Crawford County organizes farm field trips, plants and maintains school gardens, teaches children about the benefits of local food, and brings farmers into the classroom.

These activities have made a lasting impression on the students, and community support has grown steadily as children take their farm to school education home with them. The newfound awareness of local food and agriculture in Crawford County has spurred community organization.

### Bringing the community together

Under the name *Driftless Wisconsin Grown*, a group of farmers, local residents and organizations gathers monthly to discuss ways to build and strengthen the local food economy. The group has already sponsored community events and has even started a new farmers market – the first in the area.

### Supporting the local food economy

The farmers market has been a success and *Driftless Wisconsin Grown* has begun initial planning for a community kitchen space that could be rented and shared between local farmers, community members, and schools.

“We’re reconnecting young people with agriculture, making community connections, and revitalizing our local economy,” says Laura Brown, a local UW-Extension agent.

### Why Farm to School in Wisconsin?

#### Good for kids’ health

- Fresh fruits, vegetables, and other healthy foods help fight obesity.

#### Good for farmers

- Schools provide local farmers with new or expanded markets.

#### Good for the community

- Local farmers are supported and money stays in the local economy.

#### Good for schools

- Overall, schools report a 3-16% increase in meal participation when farm-fresh food is served, thus bringing in more funds.

